1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

554 A nephew is spoken of as *vasu*, which appears to be a title, not a real kinship term. It does not take the suffixed possessive; *vasunda* is not used in this connection, but *nonda vasu*. A man is constantly described as *vasu* to such a place, or to such a clan, never to an individual. Frequently when a man's name has been forgotten, he is still remembered as "the *vasu* to Totoya," or "the *vasu* to Tonga." Historical accounts constantly specify the place to which a personage was *vasu*, or discuss the point, if forgotten. This is especially true with the older generations of the pedigrees. The term is never applied to a woman.

604 425 There is a verb *vasu-ta* which describes the nephew's seizing of any property that belongs to his mother's people. A son of a Naivi man by a Tumbou woman says:

> Formerly a *vasu* could take such things as pigs, and yams, etc., from the mother's people. I could take a pig belonging to the Lord of Tumbou. Roko Liwaki and Ratu Salesi could take things from Naivi, because they are *vasu* to it. If a *vasu* wanted taro he would stick reeds in the taro patch he wanted or sound the conch over the taro. Joshua would know then, "Oh! Liwaki or Salesi has stuck reeds among the taro." This meant the *vasu* had taken possession. The expression used was: "the taro patch has been stuck with reeds" (*sa sauni tu a mbiti mai ka*); the reeds were called *i sausau* [that is, the thing used to prick]. Other wood was used besides reeds.

The tendency nowadays is simply to beg (*kerekere*), not to take without leave, for the Government treats the exercise of the right as theft. It may be noted that the *vasu* to Tumbou may take the Lord of Tumbou's pigs, though the Lord of Tumbou is not "his uncle," however distantly. It is more accurate, therefore, to say that a man can seize the property of his mother's brother's clan, than that he may take the property of the mother's brother.

The uncle, on the other hand, had a right known as *vakambale i titoko*, "causing the staff to fall." One informant says, "If Salesi or Liwaki took Joshua's taro, Joshua would take some of theirs in return. It will then be said the staff falls. One must do *vasu* first, then make the staff fall afterwards, not before." Another says a nobleman may send for a thing belonging to sister's son "that the staff may fall, if a staff falls on a thing, it is damaged." Still another is not quite certain, but he thinks it is right for the nephew simply to take anything he likes, while the uncle, for anything he fancies, sends to the nephew, who cannot refuse. He also applies, doubtfully, the expression "making the staff fall" to the nephew's appropriations as well as the uncle's, but he is alone in this. The uncle's privilege seems but little exercised; only one informant mentioned it spontaneously by accident; whereas no one can be long in Fiji without hearing of the nephew's right. Although the uncle may in a way recoupe himself, the nephew's

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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right is a burden (*ka ni onga*) because the nephew exercises his right recklessly (*vakasausa*) and to an excessive degree (*rui valata me sivia*).

The father of the boy who is a *vasu* to Naivi will make a feast called *vakatoka masi*, putting on the loin cloth for the people of Naivi. Much stuff is given to Naivi; then the boy has the right to *vasu;* otherwise he may not *vasu*.

Some *vasu* are spoken of as great *vasu*. A man may be *vasu* to the whole of Lau. Thus one Mbauan chief who was *vasu* to Lau was a great *vasu* because through his mother, the daughter of the second son of the second Sau, he had in him blood from Lakemba, Ono, Moala, Totoya, and Matuku. He was "a wide *vasu*, he covered the whole of Lau." If a great *vasu* came to Lakemba, he wore a train in front and one behind.

Another reason given was that he was *vasu itaukei* (possessor, owner, native), which may be translated native *vasu* or home *vasu*. A man of Thekena defines a home *vasu* as "'a noble who is *vasu* to us, the owners of the land." He thus takes *itaukei* (owner) to refer to the "owners of the land," that is the Tumbou half of the village. The same informant adds that this Mbauan chief was home *vasu* because he was *vasu* to Thekena, who were noble (because of his father's mother). The view that the home *vasu* is a nobleman who is *vasu* to the people of the land, that is to the heralds or the Tumbou half, is borne out by six of the seven cases which I have noted: Soroanggali, mother from Narewandamu or Thekena; Vuetasau, mother of Tanggalevu, Roko Dhovu, mother doubtful; Tione Wesile, mother of Waitambu, which is subject to Thekena; Uluilakemba I, mother from Thekena; Uluilakemba II, on account of his father Vuetasau.

Of old the home *vasu* alone was important in Lau. The *vasu* to Mbau and the *vasu* to Thakaundrove had no other title, and were treated almost as strangers for they had little prestige. Nowadays the office of home *vasu* bears less weight, and that of the *vasu* to Mbau is important only on account of the Government. Formerly only the home *vasu* was a great nobleman. That is why Soroanggali said to his younger brother Taliai, who was *vasu* to Totoya, "Be you chief that I may look after you." He himself had quite enough power without the chieftainship.

A man will often speak of himself as belonging to his mother's land. That does not mean that he does not belong to his father's country, but merely that he is at home in his mother's country.

The verb *osi* (to foster, bring up, adopt) is a term of very wide meaning. Children are not adopted in the European sense, for they continue to be considered the children of their father and mother, and relationships remain unaltered. Thus, a boy of my acquaintance did not become the brother of his adopted parents' son, but remained his sister's son (*vungo*). A small

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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arrangement. Thus Taraivosa got the land of her father, Mburua of Natokatoka, for her son; Mburua on his death had given it to one Tokai of Vatuwangga; when Tokai died it passed to Rasolo, also of Vatuwangga, who was "brother" to Tokai; Taraivosa begged the land for her son, and Rasolo promised to give it as soon as her son began to pay taxes.

A man gets land through his mother; if he comes to live with his mother's people.

Though in some cases it looks at first sight as though land had passed out of the clan, this does not actually happen. Thus Joshua and his people lived on land which his father had begged from Lemaki, the hereditary carpenter; but Lemaki holds land from the nobles only so long as he lives in Lakemba. Tiope of the clan of Ndaulakemba in Levuka held the land of Osea of the clan of Manukuira, because they had lived together, and Tiope was working off Osea's debts; nevertheless the land was spoken of as belonging to Osea's son, a boy of about thirteen.

If a member of the clan dies without issue his land reverts to his "edge of the oven." Ratu Finau however had all the edges of the oven put down as one in the Lands Enquiry so that now the land reverts to Katumbalevu as a whole.

It was definitely laid down that land could not go out of the clan except as *wa ni kuna,* the strangling rope, *ka ni mbula,* the price of life, or as *i thovithovi ni ndraundrau,* the wherewithal to pluck leaves for plates. The strangling rope is land given to kinsmen of a deceased nobleman's wife for strangling her at his death. The price of life is land given by a man to one who has saved his life. The wherewithal to pluck leaves is land given away as a woman's dowry; the land is supposed to keep her supplied with banana and breadfruit leaves on which to place the food. Such land is also called *i kaukau ni alewa* (that which is brought with a woman).

It was indeed said that a lady marrying a "small man" would also bring a dowry, and I know of one such case where the father of a lady of Naivi gave some land when she married a man of Levuka; the land is now held by the man's son. But this does not appear to be a common practice, for I was told that the reason why a lady does not bring land to the "landsmen" is that her people have no land to give. The Chief of Nasangalau says the same of his village: the nobles there had no land but what they got from other clans through their mothers.

A nobleman will sometimes perform what is called *vakalutululu,* causing to fall; this is a present of manufactured articles to his son's maternal uncles, in order to "make the land fall"—that is, to get land for his son. Meli, the head of Naivi, thus got land from his mother's clan, Tumbou;

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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others got land in this way from Narewandamu. A sister's son may not seize land by right of *vasu* (*vasuta*); he can only get it by "causing to fall."

Of old, Matailakemba, Vatuwangga, and the rest had each their strangers from Totoya, from Tonga, and other parts. A stranger got land from the edge of the oven to which he was attached; when he died it went back to the clan. Since the Lands Commission has been inaugurated, this is no longer possible, as the Tongans have been grouped together as a side of the oven; the land is therefore lost to the four groups of nobles and remains with the Tongans. There are some Solomon Islanders now living in Tanggalevu and treated as members of the clan. In olden times, a nobleman would beg a bit of land to plant in, and when the food was mature he would share it with the owner.

Some Europeans take the view that the land belongs to the chiefs; this is a claim made by some of the chiefs and nobles. Ratu Finau claims that all the land as far as Ono is the property of the Sau. "It belongs to the Chief: God appointed him."

Salesi, a nobleman (Pl. I, *A*) expressed the following opinion concerning a disputed land:

> Navutôka properly belongs to Thekena. It belongs to Katumbalevu in so far as the nobles have smitten Thekena; but it is not right for the chiefs to oppress the people. Some people imagine they are chiefs by themselves and forget that, but for the landsmen, they would not be chiefs. The present nobility owe much to Yandrana because the nobles used to invade Lakemba from Yandrana[18] and Yandrana and Natokalau took their part against Thekena. A chief is apt to forget that the ancients of Yandrana and Natokalau died for their sakes.

Joshua, a nobleman, says, "The chief only disposed of what was brought to them. He did not dispose of the land; each owner disposed of his own."

Semi of Tanggalevu says,

> The nobles of old had no land; they had only the authority (*lewa*); it is only since the Tongan rule and the Government that it extends to the soil. They could not take land; only the sister's son could bring land to the nobles; the elders of the landsmen (*matua kai vanua*) would decide to give land for their sister's son to plant in. The nobles used to refer to us landsmen. Land would be provided for strangers by Envoy to Mbau, Envoy to Thithia (that is Thekena), and the Lord of Tumbou. If Roko Tuiai wanted land for the people of Levuka he would say, "Tui Tumbou, let it be your part to provide taro land for the Levuka people to plant in." And the land was given. To Envoy to Mbau he would say, "Give some land to the Tongans." He did not dispose of it; he referred it to the old men.

CHATTELS

All property other than land is called either food (*kakana*) or manufactured articles (*i yau*). These two categories are continually opposed to

[18] When they came over from Naiau to conquer Lakemba.

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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one another, and they are also expressed by different possessives; *nona* refers to manufactured articles; *kena,* food.

The term *i yau* covers all such articles as mats, bark cloth, canoes, whale's teeth ornaments, kava bowls, oil, raw mulberry bark, pots, coir. That is, however, not the etymological meaning of the word which is an instrumental derivative of *yau,* to bring—*i yau* is therefore what is brought, that which is used as gifts. It is a difficult word to translate: I shall use the terms : manufactured articles, stuff, goods, property, gifts, as may best suit.

Whale's teeth, called *tambua,* probably from *tambu,* sacred, are polished and rubbed with oil and turmeric, and thus acquire a reddish tint. They are suspended on a coir string attached at both ends. These ornaments are becoming increasingly scarce, but are still valued as potent presents.

BEGGING SYSTEM

The looseness found in the transference of land applies even more so to chattels owing to the custom of begging from one another (*kerekere*). The Fijian practice of *kerekere* is one of the corner stones of Fijian life, so much so that to translate the term as begging is erroneous, for there is no stigma attached to *kerekere;* it is a normal practice, perhaps better translated with Dr. B. Malinowski, soliciting. If there is no kava in the house a young person will be sent to beg some from neighbors. Should a man want land to plant in, he begs it; if he is in want of money, he goes to a kinsman and begs for some, or he begs for the use of the coconut trees on a certain land in order to make copra and sell it to the stores. To take an example: Taumbale, a woman of Moala, wanted money to build a house, so she came to Fane, Salesi's wife, because they were sisters on account of their mothers being sisters, and begged to use Salesi's coconut trees. She and the men who were doing the work were put up at Salesi's and took part in the family work, Taumbale helping in the household work. The day of a church collection is a great begging time, as many have to beg in order to have enough to put in the plate.

Tongans are given to beg from all and sundry; Fijians beg from kinsfolk only. Tongans are reckless in begging; Fijians have a sense of delicacy (*mandua*).

When a man comes to a kinsman with a big request he usually brings a begging gift (*i kerci*) which he offers up (*vakathʉmbo*) with the usual formula of apology, explaining his request and appealing to their ties of kinship. This is especially done when a village comes to make a request to a nobleman.

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

It is rare that a request is refused. Excuses have to be invented. Property, in consequence, changes hands very rapidly, especially if it is anything novel. The stuff a man receives at a ceremonial exchange or festival is sometimes begged off him when he gets home. Prizes are not much of a reward, as they may not remain in the winner's hands more than a day.

The government discourages begging and an anti-begging league was founded in 1905. The custom found a champion in the Native Gazette (11, July, 1905):

> This Fijian custom is not wholly bad; it is well merely to correct it. What is Fijian begging? Begging is the requisition (*lala*) of the common folk. See, the commons in Fiji cannot make requisitions; for requisitions are the chief's part. But what are requisitions? Requisitions are begging on a very big scale; they have not ceased, but are allowed by the law. Well, the commoner has begging as his only requisition. It is plain as day moreover that there is not much begging without return. If you come and beg my lamp because you are hard up, presently when I am hard up for clothes I shall beg some of you: so my lamp will be paid for. According to Fijian custom it is hard to refuse, because it represents paying, or trading, or the mutual aid of kinsmen. It is plain also that there are men who are humbugs (i.e. who don't play the game, but abuse the custom), because that is the way of the world. That is the end of the argument, now turn to the evil of forbidding people wholesale to beg, as you are doing; the chiefs, they are free to go on putting levies upon us but then we are undone by it since we are forbidden to beg. Who is the commoner to approach you nobles and say, "Please pay me, Sir, for what I have done, or for the food I have brought," or whatever it be? Impossible. If your requisitions cease, your calls on us (*mata*) your proclamations, your pomp (*vakaturanga*), then will begging cease.
>
> There are two forms of begging in Fiji. One is begging without return after the fashion of chiefs, that is bad and should be given up. But there is also a begging when in want which is payment for work and other things, and it is right and expedient to preserve it. But it looks as though you were prohibiting both, that we commoners may die twice in consequence we shall be made to work and it will be forbidden to us to beg in return. The ancient times were better than now. The carpenters built canoes; they worked without pay inasmuch as it was a requisition on them; they were fed while it went on, and they delivered the canoe. The feast of the workers (*otho*) was finished, but there was still to come some reward. Wait till you see some stuff in the possession of the chief; they will go and beg for it.

The Fijian is shrewd. Under an appearance of lavishness he counts the cost of everything, and if, at a ceremonial exchange for instance, he does not receive the full value of what he gave, he will take the balance in prestige and admiration. If a man cannot make a full return in kind for what he has begged, he will be under an obligation and have to do all kinds of services for his neighbor. The critics of Fijian begging all reason *a priori*. The facts are there to prove that the practice does not work as they think it should. As a matter of fact, the hard worker is always better off for his rank than the lazy man, and more influential, unless he is a man of no personality who does all the work of the clan and does not exact

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6 Lakemba

764 sand into the grave; earth was thrown on the top and the whole was trampled down. The head should be turned to the east.

The word for grave is *mara;* the chiefly word is *sautambu,* holy chief; no lowborn fellow comes near a *sautambu.*

If a man is buried on the day he died, the burial feast (*mangiti ni veimbulu*) is held after the funeral. If he is buried the next day, this feast is merged in the death feast called *i mburua.* At Ratu Isoa's burial feast a pig was killed. All those who attend the funeral get a share, even distant kinsmen may attend.

766 In the old days the body of a nobleman would lie in the house, it might
365 be a whole month; the people of Narewandamu and Tandravula would
562 remain there in spite of the stench. Ratu Erone's body was kept a month in a coffin waiting for the Governor, and the conches blew all that time without cease. Of old strangers did not during that time go about for fear of being killed "to follow the breath" (*muri thengu*) of the deceased. On the day of the burial three to five of the nobleman's widows were strangled to strew the pit (*me i thoni ni lua*); a bark cloth was passed round their necks and a man tugged at either end. Even Randi Naiau might thus be strangled. The widows sometimes went to their respective clans and asked for death (*kere mate*): "I come that I may be earth for Tui Naiau" (*nggele kei Tui Naiau*). Her brothers would tell her to go and bathe, after which they strangled her either at home or at Great House. If a woman was a stranger there was no one to dispose of her; only her people might strangle her. If Tui Tumbou had a sister married to Tui Naiau, he would direct that she be strangled, an order that was carried out whether or not the woman was willing. A piece of land, generally taro land, was then given to her kins-
[425] folk as a return; this land was called the strangling rope (*wa ni kuna*).
[587] Sometimes when a widow was about to be strangled, the sons of the deceased nobleman would prevent it and take some of them to be their wives. The strangled wives were laid at the bottom of the grave and the nobleman on the top. The custom was not confined to the nobles: the wife of a Vaka-
[589 vanua, two generations ago, was strangled at his death. Surviving widows
304] were called *i loloku;* they shaved their heads, cut off a little finger and were sacred (*tambu lako*).

766 In olden days the clan of Valelailai dragged the nobleman's body to the grave on a crate, lowered it, and folded mats over the body. They received gifts which were made at the burial, also a part of the feast.

765 Either after the burial or when the mourning is over the kissing gifts are distributed among the relatives of the dead (*weka ni putu*) who brought bundles of mats.

The next feast for the dead (*i mburua*) is the largest of feasts, usually held a day or two after the burial. The death feast of one leading nobleman

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

The natives collect fruits, and greens, hunt, and set traps only in the bush adjacent to their own villages. 423

Formerly, besides clearing land, a clan could acquire garden land by marriage, war, or by gift from a chief. Occasionally, when a woman of the lower class married a noble she brought a piece of land to his clan. This was called *sovisovi ni ndraundrau* (place to collect leaves.) The woman was responsible for gathering the daily supply of edible leaves. The land remained in the man's clan unless after his death his children were adopted by their mother's clan, when the land was returned with the children. If the children remained with their father's people, even though the widow went back to her people, the land was kept also. Sotchiana of Rasea clan, Fulanga, married Tchone of Vandravandra and brought a piece of land to her husband's clan. After his death she stayed with his clan and the clan kept the land. Vunise of Sau clan took a piece of land to Vunikoro when she married Lote. The land remained the property of Vunikoro. When Semitchi of Mbete subclan, Kambara, married Kalavu of Lomatchi, she brought a piece of land. Land is no longer acquired in this fashion. If one village conquered another the victors class married a noble she brought a piece of land to his clan. This was called *ka ni mbula* (thing of life). Land was also given by one village to another in return for help in warfare, but it has been several generations since land has changed hands through warfare. 425 [565]

Today a clan may acquire the ownership of new garden land only by clearing bush. Newly cleared land belongs to the man who clears it. This means that it is used by him, his household, and his children. The clan has no right to deprive him of this land, though the land is considered to be the property of the clan. If the land is cleared by the combined labor of a subclan its use belongs to the subclan.

Small, uninhabited islands are also clan owned. The clan claims exclusive ownership of all the land and fishing rights of its island. For example, the Naivotavota clan of Kambara claims ownership of Wangava; clans of Undu village own the island of Marambo; Vuanitavola clan owns the island of Tavunasithi; the islands of the central Fulanga lagoon belong to Nasava and Vandravandra clans and to Muanaira and to Naivindamu villages. 423

Cultivated fruit trees in the village—such as breadfruit, Tahitian chestnut, banana, and *ndawa*—belong to the man who plants them, and no one but the owner is allowed to pick the fruit. Fruit trees are inherited from father to son. If a tabu has been declared on the fruit crop, the owner of the fruit trees is not allowed to pick the fruit until after the first fruits' ceremony. If the owner's right over the fruit of his trees is not respected he marks them tabu by tying a coconut leaf round the trunk. This is called *tambu*. It serves to check but does not eliminate pilfering of ripe fruit by children during the [428] 423 674